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De facto segregation in schools deprives children of certain minority groups of true equality of opportunity. Those people who propose doing nothing about integration are simply making excuses for avoiding change. The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association has set up five principles which may be used as guidelines in eliminating de facto school segregation. Plans for accomplishing school integration which have been either tried or suggested include bussing Negro students to predominantly white schools, bussing all students to schools outside their neighborhoods, establishing open enrollment, making use of school assignment, reorganizing grade groupings (the Princeton Plan), and creating educational parks. (SG)

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HOW CAN RACIALLY BALANCED EDUCATION BE IMPLEMENTED?

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HOW CAN RACIALLY BALANCED EDUCATION BE IMPLEMENTED?

Almost every generation since the rounding of our nation has included new immigrants from other countries. Although they have not had an easy battle against slums, menial labor, suspicion, and prejudice from those people already here, the immigrants have been assimilated and have risen to a respected status. Always another group has moved in to take their place.

However, for some people--Negroes, some Asians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and American Indians--the color of their skin makes their difference visible. This has become a nearly invincible obstacle against their assimilation.

> Education, service to church and community, abandonment of family and old country customs, Americanization of name--approaches that seemed to work for others have not always opened the door to equal opportunity of these groups.[1]

Through the normal processes of urban development, Negroes and other non-whites have migrated into the inner city and whites have moved out to the suburbs. As a result of white America's failure to assimilate these people, they have not been able to move out of the inner city. They are caught in a downward spiral: because of low income they must live in poor housing. The schools in these areas are often inferior so that the children receive poor educations which suit them only for low income jobs, and so the spiral repeats itself ever downward. Non-white Americans are disadvantaged not only by their poverty but also because their subcultures do not harmonize with the demands and opportunities of the modern "American way of life." Many other Americans do not respect them and their way of life. Residential patterns within the city usually find most non-white groups living in the same area due to the interrelated factors of real estate practices, socioeconomic position, high Negro population density in the cities, and "white flight" to the suburbs. Because of school assignment policies of drawing the attendance area of most schools from areas in the near-vicinity of the building, schools usually are segregated even though segregation cannot be done legally. This kind of segregation is known as de facto segregation. Throughout the remainder of this paper, the non-white group most often mentioned will be the Negro, mainly because this is the largest and most vocal group. However, the principles set forth should apply to all non-white groups.

Although Los Angeles has the fastest growing Negro population of any city in the United States, as of February, 1968, there was evidence that nothing would be done to implement desegregation of the city's schools.[9]

> In June, the Watts high schools graduated the class of 1966. Having enrolled in the first grade twelve years earlier, these young people might have been the first to be the full beneficiaries of the Supreme Court's landmark decision on school desegregation. But in the Los Angeles ghetto, these students had attended a Negro elementary school, a Negro junior high school, and a Negro high school. They had the misfortune to be in a city where the spirit of Brown v. Board of Education was not honored.[4]

Desegregation of schools in segregated housing areas is complex. Many

believe that we must desegregate housing first, but when education is seen as the key to upgrading Negro economic status, it seems as if we need to solve de facto segregation in education first.

> Racially balanced schools are commonly viewed by Negroes as the only form of public education which can adequately fulfill the American dream of equality for their children; they are convinced that only integrated living begun in the earliest years can ever eradicate racial bigotry.[10]

For 350 years separate facilities have almost always been inferior. Usually preparing children for low-income employment, they involve less expenditure per child, less trained and experienced teachers, and less adequate facilities. Some schools predominantly for the disadvantaged are high in accomplishment and morale, but too often the public school only reinforces the results of discrimination. Modern psychological knowledge indicates that schools enrolling students largely of homogeneous ethnic origin may damage the personalities of minority group children. Their motivation is decreased, ability to learn is impaired, and aspirations are restricted. Children learn to think they are untalented, unliked, and unworthy. Public education in this setting is socially unrealistic. It blocks the attainment of the goals of democratic education and is wasteful of manpower and talent. If the school cannot succeed with these children, they continue to live without the opportunities and satisfactions of most people.

Many Negroes are giving up hope that big city schools will come up with equal educational opportunities. They feel that if Negroes were in control, the schools couldn't do any worse than they are now and that they might possibly do better. They argue that since housing patterns create complete or nearly complete school segregation, why shouldn't Negroes take control?

However, most people agree that desegregation of schools is desirable. It is supported by a study of twenty-four Negro children in Syracuse, New York, who were bussed out of the ghetto compared with similarly situated Negro children at an all-Negro school.[5] The bussed children made 9.2 months' academic progress in 8 months without great supportive help in their new schools. The children in the segregated schools made only 4 months' progress in the 8 months with considerable compensatory help.

The basic question of attitude underlies all the difficulties which are hindering progress in school desegregation. There are two reasons for integration: our moral imperative to insure all children true equality of opportunity and the educational necessity to prepare every child to take his place in a world where no race may live alone. Those people who propose doing nothing about integration give the following rationalizations for their feelings:[6]

1. The proposal would set a precedent.
2. We have no precedent to guide us.
3. It is just another fad.
4. The time is not ripe for it.
5. It is an exploitation of children.
6. The situation is hopeless.
7. We can't afford it.
8. It is too controversial.

Most of these are just poor excuses for avoiding a change from the present system.

The first step in desegregation is to compile information about the ethnic composition of the school enrollment. If racial balance is to be effected in the schools, we must first agree on what "racial balance" is. Is it having in each school the same percentage of non-whites as there are in the overall schoolage population? This simple reflection of the community would be too changeable to be practical. A fixed percentage of between twenty and forty-five per cent non-whites depending upon the community population seems more practical. However, does any percentage not within this range mean the school is uniracial?

The Educational Policies Commission has set up five principles to govern the search for a solution to the problem of de facto segregation in schools and the development of an integrated school system and integrated society.[7]

1. Segregation on the grounds of race is bad. The best way to build good relations between races is for each race to have experiences with the others. The relations need to be welcome, fruitful, and such that persons are known as individuals, not as stereotypes.

2. Desegregation of schools should be planned with awareness of its possible consequences and likely effects on the whole community. No two communities are identical. Each school district's mixture of problems, community experiences, and resources influences its pattern for solving the problem.

3. The neighborhood school has many advantages, particularly in early education. The teacher knows his pupils' home and community backgrounds. Many parents prefer to have their children in school near home for convenience and transportation reasons. The school and home can be in close contact. The school may be the center upon which the neighborhood establishes its identity, but when the neighborhood school becomes improperly exclusive in fact or spirit, when it is viewed as being reserved for certain community groups, or when it creates or continues a ghetto-type situation, corrective action is called for.

4. The simple mixing of races in a school does not of itself solve all problems of integration. Desegregation is a physical phenomenon; integration is psychological. Children do not get to know each other well if they stick with their own groups even in desegregated situations. Groups must be treated as equals working together to achieve common goals. They should not directly compete against one another. If children are unable to compete academically, they may be disrespected, so desegregation should be intermeshed with compensatory education. With a minimum social and academic failure threat, success of desegregation is heightened.

5. Educational considerations should be primary in the schools. Although public passions are involved, the question to be asked about all proposals is whether they will improve the education of the pupils involved.

There are several current plans to counter the disadvantages of de facto segregation. Each of these has been tried, some more extensively than others. All plans have their advantages and drawbacks. Any urban plan should

involve cooperation of the suburban school districts. Interracial experience should be provided even in places where the population of the entire school district is of one race. Often those who most need racially balanced education--those deep in the ghetto and elementary students--are the hardest to desegregate.

In Chicago and other large cities, Negroes are so fully segregated by residence that it is impossible to place the majority of blacks in integrated schools without mass transportation distant from their homes. Bus transportation of Negroes to predominantly white schools is one of the major methods of getting children out of the ghetto schools so that they may benefit from learning in better schools. Aside from the fact that they do not come from surrounding neighborhoods as their classmates do, color and cultural differences may add to the children's separateness. Negro children become strangers if not intruders in their new schools. This instinct to repel the outsider can be countered by a patient and concerned faculty who equally restrict the activities of both the bussed and non-bussed children. In Berkeley, California, they are trying to meet these problems by bussing all students, black and white, to schools outside their neighborhoods. The ghetto schools are then improved for the white children's benefit, too. It remains to be seen how effectively this plan eliminates the problems of bussing only the inner-city children.

Also, there are administrative problems of getting left by the bus, bus driver discipline of students, distance, safety, and space use, but if consolidated and rural community schools have met these problems, city districts should also be able to. It challenges ingenuity and requires support of added costs.

Another plan for desegregation is open enrollment, wherein students have a voluntary choice of enrolling in another school and the parents pay for the transportation. High school students enjoy free transfer, but elementary children usually move only if there is room available where they want to go. Financially secure families are usually the only ones who can take advantage of this plan, and their own schools are left poorer when children switch schools. Often when blacks attend a predominantly white school in comfortable numbers, the whites leave or there is voluntary separation of both groups. To keep the whites, schools must be made compellingly attractive to both groups by adding prestige courses and so forth.

Sometimes racial balance is controlled by assignment to various schools, but assignments are quite temporary and the racial balance is continually changing. This method depends on a relatively stable population.

In implementing the following plans the best time to do anything is in conjunction with building programs. District-wide redrawing of attendance boundaries is being used to maximize racial balance. Here there is the problem of long family relationships with one school. In addition, if the old building is still used, it becomes less attractive to those who must still attend there. This plan is most successful when good new schools replace an old one and if the new boundaries appear more logical or natural than the old.

Another method is the reorganization of grade groupings, which has been used in Princeton, New Jersey, and become known as the Princeton Plan. All primary children from several areas are placed in one building, intermediate in

another building, and so on. It is planned not to divide schools into geographic subdistricts but to regroup in order to promote intercultural understanding. Richer resources of staff and equipment can be provided. This plan is especially good if there is no private school to accommodate children of resentful parents.

The most costly plan for desegregation involves creating educational parks of at least 240 acres to accommodate around 15,000 children. Sound cost projections are undetermined but the estimated costs are staggering. The park would resemble a college campus with buildings built to accommodate 500-1000 children per building. Covering a wide range of backgrounds children would be transported to a central point from a large section of the city. Urban renewal sites could be used for the parks and the old schools could be converted into civic centers or warehouses. There are several drawbacks to this plan: high cost, keeping children far from home longer, strain on an already weakened home and family unit, and a dehumanizing effect.

Elimination of racial imbalance is not an end in itself, but it stands for improvement of education for all children. Children need to be exposed to people of other cultures and subcultures. The melting-pot concept of American education is at stake.

> Experience accumulates to support the conclusion that while any plan undertaken with goodwill can help, there is no single policy or procedure or combination of operations that does the job everywhere or even in a single district over a period of years.[1]

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